Dear alumni and friends of the department:

The mission of the KU Wichita Clinical Trial Unit (CTU) is to study and advance new molecular entities for the treatment of psychiatric illness to benefit the citizens of Kansas and throughout the world suffering from psychiatric illnesses such as major depression and schizophrenia. In line with this mission, we have recent positive results and exciting new directions to report.

First, our positive recent results. We have spent two years working on studies of a ketamine-like drug to be used as a rapidly acting antidepressant for individuals with treatment resistant major depressive disorder. Last December we presented findings from a single dose study of this ketamine-like drug at a national meeting (Am. Coll. Neuropsychopharmacology). Study participants had treatment resistant depression (TRD) as defined by nonresponse to adequate trials of either a serotonin selective reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) or serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor (SNRI). Despite this previous nonresponse to SSRIs or SNRIs, this drug produced a significant improvement over placebo in 60 percent of the participants within three days of their single infusion.

We are currently working on a randomized withdrawal study of the same ketamine-like drug to assess how long people who get well can stay well. This information is important in determining how often patients with TRD need to be dosed with this drug to maintain a clinically meaningful therapeutic response.

Now, for our new directions. In 2014, the KU Wichita CTU will conduct a study of valacyclovir to treat cognitive and negative symptoms of schizophrenia and will collaborate with top tier universities/private research institutes to execute the study. In addition to KU Wichita CTU, the consortium includes University of Indiana, University of Maryland, University of Texas at Houston, and the Laureate Institute for Brain Research in Tulsa, Okla., an affiliate of the University of Oklahoma School of Medicine.

The study, funded by the Stanley Medical Research Institute (SMRI), is aimed at the cognitive impairment associated with schizophrenia (CIAS) rather than the psychotic symptoms. While CIAS is not what most people think about when they think of schizophrenia, it is the leading cause of disability for individuals with schizophrenia. Currently, there are no proven (i.e., FDA approved) options for treatment of this component of the schizophrenia syndrome.

The study stems from the theory that a virus is the cause of CIAS and hence is testing an antiviral agent, valacyclovir, in participants with CIAS. If the results are positive, this study will potentially lead to further research to prevent CIAS via vaccines in those not afflicted and to arrest and/or reverse this component of the illness in those who are afflicted.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Macaluso, D.O.

Assistant Professor and Director of Clinical Trials Research

Sheldon H. Preskorn, M.D.

Professor
Along with cooler temperatures, fall brings us into resident recruitment season. This year, we reviewed more than 950 resident applications, and selected 60 to interview. With only 20 residents in our program, each resident receives customized training throughout their residency. The interview is structured around this strength, and we only bring in five to six candidates at a time so they have one-on-one time to get to know the staff, residents, and faculty. The candidates are taken on a tour of the clinics the residents serve, allowing them to imagine a “day in the life.” A stay at the Hotel at Old Town offers the candidates a glimpse of the cultural opportunities that living in Wichita can offer.

Applicants come to us from many schools within and outside the United States, including the University of Kansas, Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences, St. George’s University School of Medicine, and The University of Oklahoma School of Medicine.

The hobbies and interests of the candidates ranged from handwriting analysis to paragliding. One of the candidates is a second-degree black belt and participated in the 1995 Junior Olympics. Another candidate is a lead singer and guitarist in a rock band. While interests varied, the predominant interests were cooking and traveling.

At this time, we plan to welcome four new residents to the program in July. We eagerly await Match Day so we can prepare for their arrival, and get to know them on a more personal level. Good times await.

Our psychology section has been equally busy recruiting for four open training positions. The neuropsychology team received 46 applications for one neuropsychology internship position within the Wichita Clinical Psychology Internship Program (WCPIP), making it the most sought after position in the consortium. After careful review, the team conducted on-site interviews with 14 highly qualified candidates and awaits news of the match results. Drs. Heinrichs and Netson recently traveled to the annual meeting of the International Neuropsychological Society in Seattle, Wash., where interviews were conducted for our neuropsychology postdoctoral fellowship. This is also a match-based selection process that offers qualified candidates the opportunity of a two-year training requirement that prepares them for board eligibility and independent practice. A strong pool of applicants this year has made the team eager to learn match results in late February.

Our child psychology group is excited about a new training opportunity for a predoctoral intern who will focus half-time on child and adolescent psychotherapy and half-time on pediatric neuropsychology. This position came about late in the application season, but we were pleased to receive 15 competitive applications. This position will help us expand our child and adolescent services as a clinic, and helps address a nationwide shortage of accredited internships for doctoral candidates in clinical psychology. Finally, we recruited for a one-year postdoctoral fellowship position in child and adolescent clinical psychology. This fellow will work primarily with Dr. Klaus providing psychotherapy services in-clinic, but will also complete in- and outpatient assessment rotations with Drs. Morgan and Netson. This position does not require a match process and we are eager to offer it to our most competitive candidate.

We look forward to learning who all of the trainees will be for the upcoming academic year and anticipate having a strong group to join our clinical and research endeavors.

Congratulations to Kelli Netson, Ph.D., and Ryan Schroeder, Psy.D., for being awarded board certification in clinical neuropsychology by the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) and American Board of Clinical Neuropsychology (ABCN). Board certification in a subspecialty area such as clinical neuropsychology demonstrates specific competencies in a specialty field, rather than the general competencies acknowledged by licensure. The purpose of board certification is promotion of a high level of skill and professionalism within the field and protection of the public at large.

ABCN was established in 1981 and seated its first group of 22 board-certified clinical neuropsychologists in 1983. The process of board certification includes a rigorous review of credentials and training, written test, critical review of case samples, and an oral examination. Currently, just under 1,000 neuropsychologists have achieved this designation. Five of those practice in Kansas, and three are KUSM–W faculty – Lyle Baade, Ph.D., ABPP Cn; Kelli Netson, Ph.D., ABPP Cn; and Ryan Schroeder, Psy.D., ABPP Cn.

Board certification in clinical neuropsychology is an optional professional designation that demonstrates a commitment to excellence in this specialized area of practice. Privileges associated with board certification include more frequent (and lucrative) legal and forensic work, increased compensation by certain insurance carriers, leadership of high-quality training programs, and respect among colleagues inside and outside of the field of psychology.

We are proud to have the highest concentration of board-certified neuropsychologists in the state of Kansas and pleased to offer this high level of service to our patients and families. Congratulations, Drs. Netson and Schroeder.
Welcome

In July, the department welcomed Cheryl Wehler, M.D., from a resident to faculty. Dr. Wehler is a board certified psychiatrist and serves as director of Medical Student Education. She also has a growing outpatient clinic.

Adrienne Harris-Connell returned to the department as a clinical research coordinator with the KU Wichita Clinical Trial Unit in November.

Mike Parmley joined the department in December as residency coordinator.

SHELDON PRESKORN, M.D.
Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences-Wichita

The Lifetime Achievement in Mentoring Award is what we fondly refer to as “The Jayhawk.” To be eligible for this award, the nominees must be professors who have served on our faculty for more than 20 years.

Dr. Preskorn has been a faculty member for 34 years, dedicating more than 28 years of service on the faculty in Wichita and six years on the faculty at the School of Medicine in Kansas City. He currently serves in Wichita.

Dr. Preskorn was described as “the ultimate teacher and role model,” one who was “easily accessible and approachable” and whose mentoring has had “no bounds.” Several mentees mentioned how helpful they felt his electronic conversations were, referencing his FWIS – “for what it’s worth” suggestions. These impromptu discussions on topics ranging from psychopharmacology and psychopathology, to the business of medicine and research occur well past the working routine of the day and reflect his dedication to the career growth of his junior colleagues.

Letters were submitted from faculty members who described “continuous mentoring relationships” with Dr. Preskorn, which began, for each, as a mentee while in residency and continued as a fellow and then as a junior faculty member.

One of the tasks of a good mentor is to help mentees recognize their own strengths and focus their goals to develop successful careers. One mentee mentioned that Dr. Preskorn “helped me to better elucidate these goals and made me aware of some goals that I had not yet realized. I believe that I have surpassed my goals because of the mentorship Dr. Preskorn has provided.” Another mentee described how Dr. Preskorn has facilitated “networking” of mentees across the country with others in the field to develop collaborative relationships and research projects. Helping mentees navigate their career path is a focus of the School of Medicine’s Junior Faculty Mentoring Program, and Dr. Preskorn has helped many faculty members find their way through his continuous career path counseling.

No higher words of praise can be given than, as one mentee wrote, “I feel that I have improved as a professional and as a person because of my work with Dr. Preskorn.” In nominating letters, mentees credited Dr. Preskorn with unselfishly fostering their skills as administrators, published faculty members, and funded researchers. Dr. Preskorn is described as “giving a leg up” to his mentees and “jumpstarting the careers of his protégés.” Several letters comment that “he helped to lay the foundation for becoming a mentor myself for residents and junior faculty members.”

This dedication is a cornerstone of Dr. Preskorn’s service to his mentees and to the institution, and exemplifies the reason he is being honored with our highest mentoring award: “The Jayhawk.”

Dr. Preskorn was unable to be present to receive his award. In his words, “Ironically, part of what I will be doing on Friday is mentoring new Ph.D. investigators who are doing studies aimed at understanding the neurobiology of mood disorders using genetics, immunology, and functional MRI.”

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GRAND ROUNDS  Grand Rounds is open to Wichita and our surrounding community and provides continuing education credits for physicians, psychologists, and nurses*. Join us at Via Christi St. Joseph, at 11 a.m. the second and fourth Tuesday to learn more on the following topics:

UPCOMING GRAND ROUNDS:

3/11/14  “Cognitive and Emotional Late Effects of Childhood Cancer” Kelli Netson, Ph.D., KU School of Medicine–Wichita


5/13/14  “Recent Data on Neuromodulation Therapies” William McDonald, M.D., Atlanta, Ga.

5/27/14  “Mapping the Neural Systems Supporting Food Motivation and Food Reward Inferences in Healthy and Depressed Adults” Kyle Simmons, Ph.D., Tulsa, Okla.

*For further information, visit http://wichita.kumc.edu/psychiatry-and-behavioral-sciences/grand-rounds.html

CONGRATULATIONS
Matthew Macaluso, D.O., was awarded Fellow status with the American Psychiatric Association.
Cheryl Wehler, M.D., passed her board exam through the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.
Matthew Macaluso, D.O., has been elected chairperson and Inna D’Empaire, M.D., has been elected vice-chairperson of the 2014-2015 Psychiatry Section leadership of Via Christi Hospitals Wichita, Inc.

Cheryl Wehler, M.D., received the EE Baumhardt Award for her paper “High False Positive Rate of a Putative Biomarker Test to Aid in the Diagnosis of Schizophrenia.”

Mercedes Perales, M.D., volunteer faculty, received the Mental Health Professional of the Year Award by the Wichita branch of the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

PUBLICATIONS

Macaluso, M. For some people shorter days can trigger SAD. Wichita Eagle. Nov. 27, 2013.

The University of Kansas Medical Center prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, age, ancestry, disability, status as a veteran, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, gender identity, gender expression, and genetic information in the University’s programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Executive Director of the Office of Institutional Opportunity and Access, IOA@ku.edu, 1054 Wesco, 3901 Rainbow Blvd., K.C., KS 66160, 913-588-5048.